

Message Text

SECRET

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71

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INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

ERDA HQS GERMANTOWN

ERDA HQS WASHDC

S E C R E T SEOUL 9647

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MNUC, MPOL, KS, UK

SUBJECT: MIXED OXIDE FUEL FABRICATION EXPERT VISITS ROK

1. ACCORDING TO UK FIRST SECRETARY IAN SLOANE, UK PLUTONIUM OXIDE/URANIUM OXIDE FUEL EXPERT J.A. LEE OF UK HARWELL ATOMIC RESEARCH CENTER VISITED ROK OCTOBER 10-30 UNDER TERMS OF REFERENCE WHICH CALLED FOR HIM TO (1) "ADVISE ON INSTALLATION AND LAYOUT OF EXPERIMENTAL PLUTONIUM HANDLING FACILITIES" AND (2) "ADVISE ON INVESTIGATION OF PHYSICAL PROPERTIES OF PLUTONIUM COMPOUNDS." LEE TOLD UK EMBASSY THAT KAERI (KOREAN ATOMIC ENERGY RESEARCH INSTITUTE) PLUTONIUM RESEARCH COULD BE REORIENTED TOWARD REPROCESSING WITH ONLY A SLIGHT MODIFICATION OF DIRECTION, ACCORDING TO SLOANE. SLOANE ADDED IT WAS STILL THE ASSESSMENT OF THE BRITISH EMBASSY THAT THE ROK DID NOT INTEND TO ENGAGE IN THE PRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, BUT THAT THEY WERE ANXIOUS TO DEVELOP THE TECHNOLOGY WHICH WOULD PERMIT THEM TO EXERCISE THIS OPTION SHOULD THEY JUDGE IT NECESSARY. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE ROKS WERE TALKING TO THE FRENCH ABOUT TECHNOLOGY WHICH MIGHT BE USEFUL IN NUCLEAR WEAPONS PRODUCTION, BUT ADDED HE DID NOT THINK FRENCH EMBASSY SEOUL WAS AWARE OF WHAT MIGHT BE GOING ON THIS AREA.

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2. PORTION OF LEE'S REPORT WHICH SLOANE SHOWED EMBOFF SAYS QUOTE (A) THE CONSULTANCY WAS TO ADVISE ON THE SETTING UP OF PLUTONIUM OXIDE/URANIUM OXIDE FABRICATION FACILITIES. IT SEEMS APPARENT, HOWEVER, THAT KAERI ARE ALSO INTERESTED IN FUEL REPROCESSING "IF THIS BECOMES NECESSARY IN THE FUTURE." THEIR EXPRESSED POINT OF VIEW IS THAT THEY WOULD WISH TO SEE REGIONAL REPROCESSING FACILITIES, E.G. IN THE U.S., BUT THAT THEY HAVE RESERVATIONS ON (I.E., THEY WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP) SUCH FACILITIES BEING AVAILABLE WITHIN THE SCALE OF THEIR FORWARD PROGRAM. (B) LASER ISOTOPE SEPARATION EXPERIMENTS BEING SET UP AT KAIS (KOREAN ADVANCED INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE) SHOULD BE NOTED. END QUOTE.

3. SLOANE SAID THAT UK WOULD BE PLAYING DOWN NUCLEAR PORTION OF TECHNOLOGICAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM WITH ROK BECAUSE OF LARGE PORTION OF PROGRAM'S BUDGET WHICH IT CONSUMES. HE SAID PROPOSAL FOR ONE ROK STUDENT TO UNDERGO PROGRAM OF STUDY IN UK ON "PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL PROPERTIES OF PLUTONIUM FUEL" HAD BEEN TURNED DOWN RECENTLY. ANOTHER STUDENT WENT THROUGH SAME STUDY PROGRAM IN MAY.

4. COMMENT: LEE VISITED KAERI BEFORE NFDC (NUCLEAR FUEL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION) WAS SPLIT OFF FROM KAERI IN MID NOVEMBER. THUS, HE WAS PROBABLY TALKING TO NFDC PEOPLE AT KAERI. UK EMBASSY HAS CONFIRMED THAT DR. LEE IS "QUITE BRITISH," AND IS NOT OF KOREAN ANCESTRY. SNEIDER

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